

Testimony
Long-Term Care Committee
Study of Dementia – Related Services
Senator Dever, Chairman
July 25, 2007

Senator Dever and members of the Long-Term Care Committee, I am Linda Wright, Director of the Aging Services Division, Department of Human Services.

During the past three years, the Aging Services Division has had an increased emphasis on services to individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias.

In 2004 the Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division was awarded an Alzheimer's Disease demonstration grant from the Administration on Aging. The grant is scheduled to end June 30, 2008. The purpose of the grant and the outcomes to date are detailed in the attachment. To quote from the attachment "the purpose of the grant is to develop and implement a systems change approach to save public expenditures by activating disease management efforts and helping families use community-based supports to significantly delay out-of-home placement of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias."

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Aging Services Division, contracts with the Alzheimer's Association of Minnesota/North Dakota;

MeritCare Medical Group, Fargo; and St. Alexius Medical Center, Bismarck, to carry out the objectives of the grant.

The North Dakota Alzheimer's Association provides community education, dementia awareness training, family caregiver training, educational workshops; Alzheimer's sessions at major state conferences; and public information through the contract with DHS.

St. Alexius Medical Center conducts memory loss screening clinics and trainings and presentations for medical staff in western North Dakota.

MeritCare Medical Group conducts training for medical professionals on Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias in eastern North Dakota. They also conduct focus groups for caregivers and a symposium on dementia and management. Two DVDs will be produced entitled "Early Identification and Dementia Assessments" and "Medical Dementia Assessments."

In addition, Lake Region State College developed an informational manual for training of family caregivers who are caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias.

We have partnered the Alzheimer's Disease demonstration grant with our National Family Caregiver's Support Program to provide "Training for Caregiver's of Individuals with Dementia" and to provide enhanced respite hours for caregivers. Approximately 200 caregivers in the National Family Caregivers Support Program are caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia.

Please refer to pages 5 and 6 of the attachment, which provides a summary of the data from the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration project.

Other services provided through the Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division and Medical Services Division, are also accessed by persons with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias. Examples would be case management, personal care, home-delivered meals, homemaker services, outreach and respite care.

The study of dementia-related services is certainly very important to our state with our growing population of older persons, especially those age 85 and older.

The Department of Human Services is available to provide any additional information to this committee as you proceed with this study.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them at this time.